Brandon Thompson

HUM2020.01

Dr. Lenz

November 23, 2020

Annotated Bibliography: The Technological Big Brother in Dave Eggers *The Circle*

Astapova, Anastasiya. "In Search for Truth: Surveillance Rumors and Vernacular Panopticon in Belarus." *Journal of American Folklore* vol. 130 (2017): p. 276+. https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A567633503/LitRC?u=fpolyu&sid=LitRC&xid=80f08951>.

This text analyses rumors of Belarus surveillance and not facts because the government does not disclose how they receive most of their information. Much of the surveillance culture is focused on citizens monitoring other citizens and reporting to the government with information. However, there was one story about a man that searched “how to make a bomb” one morning because he was curious and during lunch a military man came with a list of websites that he had visited that were ‘illegal.’ This shows that Belarus has been seemingly under the effects of a panopticon for many years and how the improvement of technology has increased the efficiency of the surveillance process.

Bentham, Jeremy. *The Works of Jeremy Bentham*. Vol. 4. Edinburgh: William Tait, 1843. 11 vols. <https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/1925>.

This text shows the original design for the panopticon. Originally designed by Samuel Bentham as a concept for condensing a Russian estate into a single ‘family house,’ where the nobleman was placed at the center and his peasant workforce around him. Jeremy Bentham believed that “to say it all in one word, it will be found applicable … to all establishments whatsoever, in which … a number of persons are meant to be kept under inspection.” (Bentham 40) Later the panopticon is used as metaphor by philosophers for a state of surveillance, and the impact that constant surveillance has on its subjects.

Lyon, David. "Surveillance culture: Engagement, exposure, and ethics in digital modernity." *International Journal of Communication* (2017): p. 824+. Online. <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A504267249/LitRC?u=fpolyu&sid=LitRC&xid=9cfb6e00>.

Lyon believes that the concept of surveillance culture needs to be added to the conceptual tool kit. According to Lyon, surveillance culture is “a product of contemporary late-modern conditions, or simply of digital modernity.” (Lyon 826) The willingness of everyday people to share their data with large corporations and large amounts of other people shows that we have shifted from a “surveillance state,” where the main activity came from intelligence agencies, to a “surveillance culture.” This is synonymous with the themes of “The Circle” where people continuously give up privacy for ease of use, as well as how often global corporations are linked with governments to control surveillance.

Stoddart, Eric. "WHO WATCHES THE WATCHERS?: TOWARDS AN ETHIC OF SURVEILLANCE IN A DIGITAL AGE." *Studies in Christian Ethics* 21.3 (2008).

Stoddart beings up the concept of ‘dataveillance’ originally coined by R. Clarke, as “the capture of data and its processing, at previously unimaginable speeds, in vast quantities and with increasing complexity.” (Stoddart 363) Stoddart also notes that previously, a majority of the data was separated between different companies and organizations. Now, however, companies sell data to other companies for marketing purposes, connecting diverse databases for commercial interests that enables the surveillance society that we live in. Describing surveillance as “the focused, systematic and routine attention to personal details for purposes of influence, management, protection or direction.” (Stoddart 364) Surveillance can be good if the intensity varies depending on environment, it is when there is no escape from the surveillance, like in The Circle, that surveillance becomes a major issue.

Weissman, Jeremy. "P2P surveillance in the global village." *Ethics & Information Technology* 21 (2019): 29-47.

Peer-to-Peer surveillance is described as the ability for the many to watch the many. Social networking sites like Twitter and Facebook allow people to keep a constant watch on others with alarming detail. Weissman compares Kierkegaars’s essay “Two Ages: A Literary Review” where a mass of ordinary people, the public, controls power over the individual through the need to be aware of the public’s opinion when making decisions. We can see this happen when May goes transparent, the force of public opinion obliterates individuality in the individuals attempt to conform to what the majority feel is right.